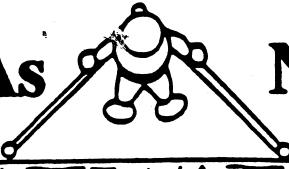


Scott Out As NWA Booker

COMPLETE STORY ON PAGE 10

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MATWATCH

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Super Sunday Special Edition 212 PINE HILLS AVE

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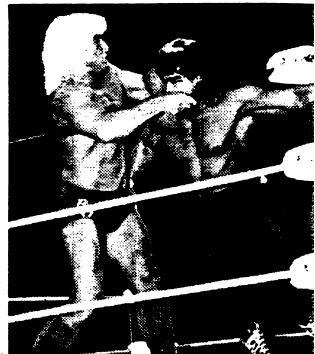
Super Sunday Special

Hogan Regains WWF Title; Steamboat Keeps NWA Belt



Hulk Hogan, using his patented legdrop, regained the WWF heavyweight championship Sunday in New Jersey, while Ricky Steamboat---in a controversial finish---took two out of three falls in a comeback victory over Ric Flair to keep the NWA world title in New Orleans.

Hogan recaptured the WWF belt from Randy Savage in 17:34 before a full house at Trump Plaza in Atlantic City. Steamboat, in a dramatic final fall which saw Flair's leg clearly on the ropes in reverse angle replay, won his title bout in 54:36 before an estimated 5,000 in the Superdome.



* * * W R E S T L E M A N I A V * * *

The Hogan-Savage encounter saw more wrestling in portions of the match than usually offered in any typical Hogan event. Savage ran out of the ring early and at 3:00, threw Elizabeth, in the promised neutral corner, in front of him. Hogan offered a nice chain wrestling series into hammerlock at 3:30. Hogan then scored with a suplex, fists and an armbar before Savage rallied with a leap off the top rope at 4:46 for a 2-count. Savage was tossed out of the ring at 6:22 but Savage returned with a counterattack and Hogan juiced severely from the eye, more than is usually seen in a WWF event. Savage tried a cradle at 9:36 for another 2-count but began showboating and Hogan grabbed the WWF champion and slammed him over the top rope onto the floor. As Savage recovered, he slapped at Liz and the confusion continued until the referee finally ordered Liz away from the ringside area at 13:40, to the tune of Savage shoving his wife.

Savage then dropped off the top rope with a double ax-handle onto Hogan for a $2\frac{1}{2}$ count and then dove onto Hogan's throat and began choking him with the tape around his wrist. As Jesse Ventura announced, "Pukeamania is about to die," Savage flew with his patented elbow from the top rope but as he landed, Hogan kicked out on only one---not milking the finish and beginning his Superman comeback which led to his only finishing move, the legdrop, at 17:34. And then, the typical, "I can't hear you," cartoon show resumes for a new run.

Match Rating: POWERSLAM-PLUS. This may have been a PILEDRIVER just for the incredible work Savage did in carrying Hogan but I grade it down for the predictable finish. It would have been far more dazzling to see Hogan win with a classic wrestling maneuver, or at least something we haven't seen previously. Still, the match was not full of the letdown many fans feared of a total Hogan runaway in five minutes or less.

In other events:

INTERCONTINENTAL TITLE: RICK RUDE D. ANABOLIC WARRIOR to win belt. Rude took two hard slams at 4:00 but after a series of missed moves, went for a piledriver at 5:00 and gained a 2-count. The Warrior rallied and went for a suplex at 10:15 but Bobby Heenan pulled the Warrior's foot and Rude scored the fall at 10:26. Warrior then slammed Heenan. BOMB-PLUS.

WWF TAG TITLE: DEMOLITION D. POWERS OF PAIN/MR. FUJI Demo controlled the first four minutes until P.O.P. rally and Fuji tags in to use chops on Ax. Crowd really died on this one after intros. But Fuji missed top rope dive onto Ax at 5:32. Smash tags in and creams both Powers until Warlord holds for Fuji to powder but Smash ducks and Warlord takes the powder and the loss at 7:12. RESTHOLD.

RED ROOSTER D. BOBBY HEENAN: Still recovering from the Rude slam, Heenan tried to run but missed a run into the Rooster and posted himself. Terry scored the pin at :32. Brawler runs in and gets in a few blows before Terry rallies. BOMB.

BAD NEWS BROWN VS. JIM DUGGAN (Double DQ): Not much here. Brown attacked Duggan early and missed a ghettoblaster at 3:13. Bad News rolled out, went for a chair, and Duggan went for the 2x4 and both were disqualified. Duggan then 2x4 clotheslined Brown. BOMB-PLUS.

HART FOUNDATION D. HONKY TONK MAN/GREG VALENTINE: Anvil was lifted by Bret into a stiff shoulderblock of Greg at 1:36 but Honky tagged in and began to rally on Bret. He went for the shake, rattle & roll at 4:25 and gained a 2-count. Valentine then failed to score the win with a figure-4. But as the teams are arguing with the ref, Anvil tosses the megaphone to Bret, who nails Honky and scores the fall at 7:38. DRAW.

ANDRE THE GIANT VS. JAKE ROBERTS (Jake wins DQ): In this year's WRESTLEMANIA candidate for Worst Match of the Year, Andre sat on Jake at 2:00 but gets hooked in the ropes at 3:30. Jake pounds away and then tries to get Damien, but is stopped by ref John Studd. Studd & Andre begin to argue and Ted DiBiase steals Damien. But Jake clobbers Ted and gets the snake back. As he returns to the ring, Andre is choking and clobbering Studd, earning him a DQ. He runs when Damien arrives. BOMB.

TULLY & ARN D. STRIKE FORCE: As expected, Rick Martel turns heel, walking away from Tito Santana at 7:06 after Tito accidentally hits him with a shoulder block at 3:50. The workrate is strong early but the audience is surprisingly dead for this one. Tully & Arn score the fall with a doublepiledriver on Santana at 9:06. DRAW....not bad, but not as good as predicted.

DINO BRAVO D. RONNIE GARVIN: In what may be Ronnie's swan song, the former NWA champion was in one of the two worst of the day. The crowd snoozed as Bravo pinned Ronnie at 3:50 with a side suplex. Garvin decked Frenchy Martin afterward. Jimmy Snuka introduced inexplicably before the match. BOMB-PLUS.

CURT HENNIG VS. OWEN HART BLAZER: Owen was allowed to do more than he's ever done in the WWF but Hennig did little and that weakened the match. Boos and even chants of boring were heard after the first 1:30. Owen tried a belly-to-belly at 4:34

but Curt clotheslines Hart as he argues with the ref and pins him at 5:26 with the Perfect-Plex. DRAW.

BUSHWACKERS D. ROUGEAUDS: Lots of early comedy but crowd quieted quickly. Plenty of brawling but as Jacques is talking to Jimmy Hart, Butch uses Luke as a battering ram on Raymond and the Sheepwackers win in 5:13. RESTHOLD.

TED DIBIASE D. BRUTUS BEEFCAKE: Strong early Beefcake offense makes Ted retreat. Slams and a clothesline send Ted over top at 2:35. Virgil trips up Brutus at 4:10. Ted rallies until Beefcake gets 2-count package at 6:20. Ted is rammed 10 times into turnbuckle and Beefcake tries sleeper at 9:40. But Virgil distracts and Ted tosses Brutus out. The two begin brawling and are both counted out at 10:06. Brutus then posts Ted and destroys Virg in the post-match. POWERSLAM.

TWIN TOWERS D. ROCKERS: This honestly may have been the best match of the day. Tremendous speed vs. power. After rapid Rocker offense, Akeem & Bossman used double avalanche of Shawn at 4:30. Both Rockers flying shoulderblocked Akeem at 6:20 but Bubba rallied and tossed Janetty over the top, caught Michaels with a spinebuster and Gang followed with the splash and pin at 8:00. POWERSLAM-PLUS.

HERCULES HERNANDEZ D. KING HAKU: Maybe this was insurance against possible court problems for Haku. He offered two backbreakers at 5:00 and a bear hug at 6:00. Hercules scored a cross body ride at 7:30. Haku missed the same at 7:45. Herc had a powerslam at 8:27 but Haku recovered and missed a headbutt at 8:56. Hernandez suplexed him for the pin at 9:04. RESTHOLD-PLUS....not that strong an opener but not a disaster.

PIPER'S PIT: Both Brother Love and Morton Downey did "jobs" for Roddy here. Roddy arrives after Bro. Bruce does a solo bit impersonating Piper and Morton Downey tells Love (who's wearing a Piper kilt), "Any guy who wears a skirt, I don't want to love me." Piper says Love has "child-bearing hips," and after teasing Love, rips the kilt skirt off to show his wide red underwear. Love retreats and Downey begins blowing smoke in Roddy's face. Finally, after the fourth or fifth smoke blow, Roddy uses a fire extinguisher all over Mort. The segment was good because of Piper but a bit long and some of Roddy's recent Portland skits have been every bit as good. POWERSLAM.

INSTANT RECAP: The show, overall, was much better than last in its focus but I still think four hours is too long and, frankly, the final hour and a half lost a lot of steam until the finale....Lots of early audio and satellite problems on our feed here....Jesse did a 360° turnaround from his lethargic effort last year. He really set up the finish of Hogan-Savage with his, "Pukeamania is about to die," as Savage climbed the rope for his elbow....Big bloopers at the start: "AMERICA THE BEAUTIFUL" plays and Robin Smith doesn't get cue to sing. I wish she hadn't when they returned to her....I still question the wisdom of Trump Tower other than the \$\$\$, which are the most important things. There were times the lull in audience reax was embarrassing, particularly in mid-card....My rating may disagree with others but Hogan & Savage, thanks to Randy, put on a much better match than I had anticipated. Hogan was too predictable at the end but do you think Vince cares?

MATWATCH 25 SCALE: Overall Production, 4.2; Quality of Matches, 2.8; Announcing, 4.0; Crowd Enthusiasm, 2.4; Overall Excellence of Show, 3.8. TOTAL: 17.2.

NWA WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP: RICKY STEAMBOAT D. RIC FLAIR in 2-3 falls: This one reminded me so vividly of the old Brisco-Funk matches of the '70s and may have been one of the most grueling I have ever seen. The early moments weren't as fast-paced as in CHI-TOWN but these guys knew they were going 55. Good early counterwrestling showcased the second five minutes in a match which saw 51 near-falls. Flair scored the first fall in 19:33 with a small package hold.

In Fall 2, Steamboat came out much more aggressively and began going to a series of chops and offensive maneuvers. Both men took extensive bumps and the action went both inside and out of the ring on two occasions. Steamboat applied a double chicken wing, a hold I have not seen used for finish purposes in years and---something you won't see perhaps ever again in your lifetime (and I can't remember the last time it happened), Ric Flair conceded at 40:06. There's a class example for today's younger performers who hem and haw about doing jobs for the good of a promotion.

For the final fall, the action became aggressive again with Flair scoring thirteen two-counts alone. One, after a cross body block went for 2 7/8 and Steamboat milked the kickout to its championship best. But at 54:00, Steamboat caught Flair again in the double chicken wing and his knee buckled, with Flair falling onto Steamboat. Both men's shoulders appeared to be down and from the camera angle on the fall, Steamboat and, perhaps, Flair, as well looked to have rolled their shoulders up before the three-count. But Tommy Young scored the fall for Steamboat, much to the dismay of Flair, who claimed his foot was through the ropes. The fall came at 54:36.

In the post-match interview, a "reverse angle" replay---an inspired bit of sports-oriented hype (though it should have been supered REVERSE ANGLE to add impact) showed Flair, indeed, had his foot on the ropes on the count of one. Steamboat had just finished saying to Jim Ross, "It's time to move on. There are many other worthy contenders Turner has told me about that deserve a shot." Steamboat admitted after seeing the replay that Flair had a legitimate gripe, which sets the controversy for the May 7 rematch in Nashville on PPV.

Match Rating: PILEDRIVER-PLUS. So much went into that 23 minutes in Chicago that it had to rate a PINFALL! This was a different style match but had all the elements of what went into many of the matches the seven ex-NWA world champs at ringside had experienced through the years.

NWA WORLD TAG TEAM CHAMPIONSHIP: VARSITY CLUB D. ROAD WARRIORS to win belts. Tremendous power exchanges in the early 5:00 before Mike Rotunda clamps an abdominal stretch on Animal at 7:23. Animal powers out but Kevin Sullivan chairs him at 8:30. Animal rallies for a clothesline at 9:30. Hawk tags in and goes wild on offense and then Animal tosses aside Teddy Long. Animal clotheslines Rotunda for the finish but Long, feigning a back injury, doesn't count. Sullivan posts Paul Ellering outside and in a reversal, Long comes over and fast-counts the pin for the Varsity Club. One of the best screw-job efforts to get the belts from the Warriors. POWERSLAM-PLUS....Teddy will now become heel manager Theodore R. Long.

U.S. TAG TEAM CHAMPIONSHIP: EDDIE GILBERT & RICK STEINER D. SULLIVAN/DANNY SPIVEY to keep title. The other half of the Varsity Club attack Eddie & Rick early. Eddie took some massive bumps in the first two minutes. Steiner tags in for a belly-to-belly suplex on Spivey at 3:30. After a Steiner clothesline, all sorts of confusion is in progress but Gilbert uses Missy Hyatt's Gucci bag on Kevin for the fall at 4:18. Eddie is pounded until his eye juices afterward but Rick saves with a chair.

RANGER ROSS WINS DQ OVER IRON SHEIK: In one of the card alterations, Ranger makes a spectacular entrance by "parachute" but is attacked with the Iranian flag. The Sheik applies the abdominal stretch at 1:07 but Ranger rallies and is about to win when Rip Morgan hits him with the flag, causing a DQ. Time: 2:12. RESTHOLD.

BOB ORTON JR. D. DICK MURDOCH: In a match with the identical finish to the WEF's Rude-Warrior match, Murdoch takes it to the outside at 8:20 and scores an elbow at 9:10 before setting Orton up for the brainbuster. But Gary Hart trips up Murdoch and Orton falls on him for the pin. RESTHOLD...crowd awfully silent for this one in much of it.

JUNKYARD DOG D. BUTCH REED: Mostly a brawl, Reed scored with several elbows mid-match before a resthold. Reed goes for his tackle for a 2-count at 8:30. Matsuda is hot and argues with the ref and JYD reverses a whip and crashes Reed into Hiro for the pin at 8:56. RESTHOLD...finish a surprise. Do you realize Dustin Rhodes is the most significant victim of Reed's since he came in?

GREAT MUTA-MUTO-MOTA D. STEVE CASEY: This one was totally one-sided except for a short rally by Casey at the 5:30 mark. Lots of spinning moves and his classic over-the-top rope dive onto the floor atop Casey at 4:18. Mota set him up for a reverse flip off the top and scored the fall with it at 8:10. RESTHOLD-PLUS....I just wish a more offensive opponent were in with him. He is a joy to watch.

SAMOAN SWAT TEAM D. MIDNIGHT EXPRESS: Ending in a fashion which leaves the door open for a Midnights/Cornette return, Cornette caught Samu early with the racket. The early workrate was strong with the Midnights mostly in control. Samu suplexed Stan at 7:15 for a 2-count. Eaton got in trouble midway through and finally made his way to Lane for the tag. The two attempted a battering ram headbutt on the SST but it didn't faze them. Bobby goes for a neckbreaker at 20:30 but in the midst of a melee, Fatu uses the Paul E. Dangerously phone on Fatu and scored the fall in 21:27. POWERSLAM....an excellent opener, far better of the two lid-lifters.

INSTANT REVIEW: Flair-Steamboat II would again gain a nomination as one of the finest cable or pay matches of 1989 but I have to believe that finish is going to put Steamboat in a spot of being booed worse than ever in the arenas and on May 7 because Flair comes away appearing to be ripped off and if they do slap the belt back on him in Nashville, expect one of the biggest babyface reaxes of the year. It's the worst of timing for Steamboat, a performer I admire tremendously for what he's brought to this series....This show had the best match of the day and the best of any of the CLASH series, but it was not up to the overall par of last year on two accounts: no Luger and Sting because of early matches running long and the smallish crowd (an estimated 5,000...1,300 paid...in the Superdome) just didn't pop as did last year's crazy bunch in Greensboro....Impressive, though, was the light show used for the entrances. Ranger Ross' parachute didn't come off that well on TV because the lighting was weak but many of the others were spectacular....The Sting and Luger matches were taped and will be shown Saturday night on WCW....Terry Funk offered insightful analysis on the championship affair but wasn't in his Florida character, so he wasn't as strong as he comes across as that hilarious heel.... Jim Herd's remarks at the top of the show with the ex-champions were well-taken: "We promise to extend our energies to protect the credibility your sweat has earned." I only wish they had interviewed Rogers, Kiniski, O'Connor and Dory just to add spice to it....However, they needed to tell the average Joe who Herd is because no one knew until later (except newsletter readers) that he's the NWA's senior vice president....Tom Prichard is coming in and may have teamed with Brian Pillman at TV tapings this week....Rumors are flying rampant that Owen Hart (sans mask) is indeed coming in but it's not absolutely confirmed....Bill Watts was interviewed, or at least, scheduled to be Saturday for the booker's job but at deadline Sunday night, the status had not been confirmed. One report says he's in. Another says he'll be a consultant. Check your OBSERVER or TORCH this week....their deadlines are later than mine and I can't say it for sure until I have it on full authority.

MATWATCH 25 SCALE: Overall Production, 4.5 (except for one camera shot, nothing major in the way of flaws and a lot of glitz); Quality of Matches, 2.6; Announcing, 4.2; Crowd Enthusiasm, 2.5; Overall Excellence, 3.0 (grading down on not having Luger & Sting inside). TOTAL: 16.8.

FINAL THOUGHTS: Next week, we'll run down the BEST LINES, BEST PICTURES, etc., from the day. Overall, WM5 did give the fans what they came for, even though Hogan's finish was all too predictable (just ONCE, I'd like to see him win without the legdrop). The match was not a Super Bowl letdown. Some of the better mid-card matches did not come off as well as I had hoped. But it was a day in which I don't think either organization really kicked the other's hide creatively. But the slight edge goes to the WEF because two of the NWA's star performers were bounced for time purposes. However, the NWA showed me signs in stages of what many fans hope it can become. All but one match had a pinfall and the great Flair even submitted. Plus, the show accomplished what many insiders felt could not be done: ripping the title out of the Road Warriors and letting them keep their heat. That finish had Eddie Gilbert written all over it. I will review both shows again this week and see if any common threads come into my mind before next week's issue. Hope you had a fun Sunday!

MATWATCH SCALE: PINFALL! - Must See PILEDRIVER - Excellent
POWERSLAM - Good DRAW - Average RESTHOLD - Fair BOMB - Poor
PLUS - Midscale Rating.

(WCCW) - Cactus Jack Manson d. J.J. Funk when Skandor Akbar pulls J.J.'s foot; Botswana Beast d. Bill Irwin; Eric Embry d. Beast to get 5 min. w. Akbar but Devastation ambushes Eric; 6-MAN: Jeff Jarrett/Brickhouse Brown/Chris Adams no contest vs. Beauty & the Beast & Buddy Roberts. ANGLE: Killer Brooks confesses to "kidnapping" Embry last week. INTERVIEW: Percy Pringle displays letters demanding Embry's return. DRAW.

(ACW) - L.A. Stephens d. Len Wagner; Nelson Royal d. Ricky Nelson using knucks; Ivan Koloff d. Tai; TV TOURNEY SEMIFINAL: Tommy Angel d. Colt Steel; Doug Somers no contest Sam Houston; INTERVIEW: The D.I. (Bob Carter) returns. RESTHOLD-PLUS.

(SCW) - Steve Prichard wins DQ over Tommy Rich when Mr. Atlanta runs in; Steve Reeves d. Louie Louie; Nick Busich d. Lee Scott; 6-MAN: Steve Lawler/Dino Minelli/Joe Deaton vs. Ga. Power & John Michaels in progress as show ends. BLAST FROM THE PAST: Abdullah the Butcher d. Mark Allen. BOMB-PLUS....the announcing killed the only decent wrestling.

(PWIW) - WWF, WM5 Update; WCCW, Manson d. Falk; SCW, Deaton d. Reeves; CWA, Ronald V. Gossett Jr. egged by Jerry Lawler; ACW, Jimmy Garvin wins DQ over Nelson Royal; PORTLAND, S. Rockers d. Abuda Dein/Grappler; CWF, Tony Anthony pearlharbors The Dog; NWA, U.S. TITLE: Eddie Gilbert/Rick Steiner win belts from Kevin Sullivan/Steve Williams. WRESTLERS OF WEEK: Gilbert/Steiner. POWERSLAM.

(WEF) - All three shows offer retrospectives of various WM5 feuds, including Jake vs. Andre; Demolition vs. Powers of Pain; Beefcake vs. DiBiase; Rude vs. Warrior and Hogan-Savage split. POWERSLAM....for all 3 shows.

(PORTLAND) - Carl Stiles d. C.W. Bergstrom; Scott Peterson d. Rex King; Buddy Rose/Nord the Barbarian no contest vs. Jonathan Boyd/Brian Adams w. wild brawl; Top Gun d. Scotty the Body by countout; Beetlejuice d. Joey Jackson. ANGLES: Nord hits Adams with soaking wet mop, then, in post-match, slams the referee and Grappler hits faces with a bench. Stiles uses a banquet table on Rose's head to break it up; In Rose Garden, Steve Doll is slapped from behind and thinks Peterson did it (actually, it was Scotty; Matt Borne cuts Beetlejuice's

hair and challenges him to a "hair match," so Roddy Piper appears with huge hedge clippers to even score. PILEDRIVER....outstanding show!

(AWA) - Tommy Jammer holds Col. DeBeers to 10-min. draw and wins "\$2,500" but DeBeers pile-drives Jammer on floor before Derrick Dukes saves and gets the money back; AWA WORLD TAG TITLE: The Olympians (Ken Patera & Brad Rheingans) d. Badd Co. to win belts. ANGLE: DeBeers demands match with Dukes. If DeBeers wins, he paints Dukes white. If he loses, Dukes paints him black. DRAW-PLUS....one of this group's better shows.

(FLORIDA) - More review of the HOMECOMING but no specific report this week. At least 2 stations didn't get their tapes on time.

(CWF) - Todd Marton/Danny Davis d. Alan Martin/The Cobra; Tom Prichard d. Buddy Gold; Johnny & Davey Rich lose to Bill Dundee/Mike Davis when Jamie Dundee powders Davey and Davis pins; Wendell Cooley d. Larry Davis; Hunters d. David Elder/Bill Holliday. VIDEOS: Jeff Jarrett, Jerry Lawler. ANGLES: Continental Cat funeral (see COMINGS & GOINGS); Bill Dundee offers to ref a Cooley-Pritchard match but David Woods makes him put up his 3k ring as insurance against a doublecross. POWERSLAM....good Dundee effort.

(NWA/TBS) - [WCW]: NWA TV TITLE, Sting d. Mike Rotunda for belt and \$10,000; Kevin Sullivan/Danny Spivey d. Gilbert/Steiner when Kevin posts Gilbert, who is checking on Missy Hyatt (who had been grabbed by Kevin); Bob Orton Jr. d. Dewayne Bruce; Shane Douglas d. The Raider (Doug Gilbert); Great Mota d. Cruel Connection I & II; OTHER WINNERS: SST, Ron Simmons, Ranger Ross, Jack Victory. POWERSLAM....2 fine, fine matches.

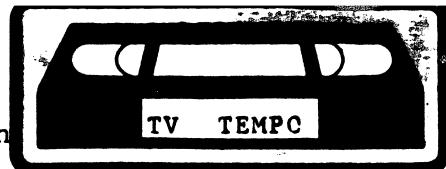
[COUNTDOWN]: Steve Williams/Mike Rotundo d. Gilbert/Steiner in another "travesty of justice." POWERSLAM....for overall show.

(NWA/SYND.) - [NWA PRO]: Gilbert/Steiner d. Raider/Lee Scott; Victory/SST d. Bob Emory/Cougar Jay/Jerry Price; OTHER WINNERS: Rotunda/Spivey, Ricky Steamboat, Mota, Lex Luger/Sting. PEDICINO'S NOSE: Joe reveals Mota is "son of Kabuki" and shows clips of DANGER ZONE angle w. Jack Victory and Randy Rose. BOMB-PLUS.

[WORLD WIDE]: From OMNI: Michael Hayes turn on Luger; Varsity Club d. Tony Suber/Greg Brown/Bruce; Other winners: Sting, Ranger Ross, Mota, Midnight Express. BOMB-PLUS.

(CWA/SYND.) - Dutch Mantel d. Chris Frazier; Brian Lee/Wrestling Machine d. Rough & Ready;

Master of Pain d. Rodney Nappoer; Robert Fuller/Action Jackson d. Jed Grundy/Jungle Jim McPherson; Mason-Dixon Connection vs. Masamoni ends in melee. DRAW-PLUS.



LINES OF THE WEEK - 1. Arsenio Hall & Randy Savage, ARSENIO HALL SHOW: AH, on Savage-Liz relationship: "At some point, had you... gotten some, maybe?" RS, "You're talking about hanky-panky... I think at some point, maybe I should have." 2. Michael Hayes & Jim Ross, WCW: MH, "One thing about Mota is he's younger than his father." JR, "Most men ARE younger than their fathers, Mike. A little genealogy lesson there." 3. Scotty the Body & Don Ross, PORTLAND: STB, "If they want to see scientific wrestling, they can watch me." DK, "No, that's science fiction." 4. Jesse Ventura, WWF: "Yeah, McMahon, I hear the excitement's already gotten to you. I hear you lost your shorts at the crap table." 5. Paul E. Dangerously, WCW: "Next to a Nissan 300 GX, Mota's the greatest product ever to come out of the Orient." 6. Percy Pringle, WCCW: "You buy the tickets. You put groceries in my refrigerator, so you do what I say!" 7. Brother Love, WWF: "The only thing Bro. Love will be KISS-ing will be the pest-als on the roses Morton Downey will be bringing to PIPER'S PIT." 8. Savage & Hall, HALL SHOW: RS, "Vanity? I don't know her." AH, "You're the only one that doesn't." 9. Kevin Sullivan, NWA PRO: "With a charming personality like Paul E. has, I wonder why he needs a bodyguard." 10. Jim Ross, WCW, to Hayes & Paul E.: "You're getting just like Casey Kasem—long-distance dedication."

11. Hayes, WCW: "Steiner's bread ain't baked all the way." 12. Lance Russell, WWW: "Cornette can talk the feathers right off a wooden Indian's headdress." 13. Pringle, WCCW: "Frank Dusek, you USED Eric Embry." 14. Paul E., COUNTDOWN, to Ross: "You have to be J.R. 'cause it's Friday night." 15. Paul E., COUNTDOWN, to Ross: "You want to be Wade Boggs and you think I'm Pete Rose." 16. Bob Caudle & Sullivan, NWA PRO: BC, "Those 2 guys (Luger & Sting) make a good looking team." KS, "Yeah, with bags on their heads." 17. Tom Prichard, CWF: "The Dirty White Boy's a nice guy. He's paying for a funeral tonight." 18. Lee Marshall, AWA, after Diamond Dallas Page gets in his face: "Do you have any Certs or Chloraseptic?" 19. Ross, COUNTDOWN: "That whistle at ringside is Kevin Sullivan, not somebody calling for a cab." 20. Russell, WWW: "That's not a face (Mota) you want to see standing over your bed at night."

21. Scotty the Body, PORTLAND: "When you rake Carl Stiles' eyes, you have to go through only half the effort." 22. Bob Orton Jr., WCW: "You don't have to call Bob Orton Jr. JUNIOR any more." 23. Hawk, WCW: "I was so proud. Animal and I only got in six fights while we were on vacation." 23. Arsenio Hall, to Savage: "I'm afraid you're gonna have a flashback and think I'm Koko B. Ware." 24. Savage, AHS: "I'll tell you...Pete Rose is betting on me."

STRONGEST COMMENTS - 1. Lou Thesz, COUNTDOWN: "Sixty minutes would be a long haul for much of the wrestling you see on TV today." 2. Harley Race, COUNTDOWN: "Between the 2 of us (Race/Thesz), there's not anyone who's wrestled 60 minutes any more except for the challenger." 3. Ross, WCW: "The burners have been turned up in the NWA." 4. Hayes, WCW: "The only thing strong about Luger is his breath."

QUESTIONS OF THE WEEK - 1. Savage, AHS, to Morgan Fairchild: "Isn't it great we didn't wear the same outfit?" 2. Sullivan, NWA PRO: "Do you think Jack Victory goes to the same tailor as Johnny Cash?"

DUM QUESTION OF THE WEEK - Marc Lowrance, WCCW, who immediately after Killer Brooks confesses to kidnaping Embry, asks, "Is he claiming responsibility for this?"

ETERNAL OPTIMIST AWARD - Ric Flair, "In New Orleans, they tell me there's gonna be 40,000 people."

TRUTH IN ADVERTISING AWARD - Frank Dusek, WCCW: "Muto, nor Kendo Nagasaki are even in the country."

BEST PICTURES - 1. Savage, WWF: slashing throat as symbol of death to Hulkamania. 2. PORTLAND, Nord/Rose vs. Adams/Boyd brawl. 3. TBS, Rotunda-Sting match. 4. WCCW, closeup of Botswana Beast's tongue.

WORST ANNOUNCE TEAM IN HISTORY - Ben Masters & Alan Starr, SCW.

DREADED GLITCH AWARDS - 1. TBS, shaky camera work during Race/Thesz entrances. 2. NWA, tape "wow" during "The Caissons Go Rolling Along" on WWW. 3. NWA, Sting super pops up at wrong time on NWA PRO. 4. SCW, shot of Auction Barn ceiling.

NICKNAME OF THE WEEK - "Squirt Gun," given to Derrick Dukes by Diamond Dallas Page, AWA.

BLOOPER AWARDS - 1. Starr, SCW, for calling Lee Scott Lee MAJORS and Lee MASTERS, and for repeatedly calling Mr. Wrestling II "WRESTLER II." (Come on Blackwell, spare us any more of this guy.) 2. Ross, TBS, for "the team of Gilbert & Sullivan..." (Well, Jim, they've always said wrestling was theatre.) 3. NWA announcers for continuing to call Mota MUTO and MUTA (why did they change his name anyway?)

ALL-CLICHE TEAM - Hayes, WCW, "...all she wrote."

BOO AWARD - SCW, for the Masters/Starr team. It's easy to be a critic from here but this is not even professional. Surely, Blackwell can find SOME talent to at least get the names correct or speak in complete sentences.

TUBE TALK

I wonder what people think who are hardcore fans and didn't know George Scott was gone when they watched the WCW show Saturday night. It was a solid improvement....That CWF angle eulogizing the Continental Cat was even funnier than described to me. I just think they should have had the camera follow the hearse completely away from the arena....CWF is plugging Kerry Von Erich in for the April 16 Montgomery card in a tag match against The Hunters....Part of the reason for the departure of Willie B. Hert from CWF is he booked himself on an indie show the same night as a Knoxville card....Randy Savage's ARSENIO HALL SHOW appearance was more as a comedian heel than the heavy, woman-hating heel. He was even deferential to Morgan Fairchild but who wouldn't be?

What had to again be embarrassing for the NWA is for the second straight year, an ad for the WWF's WRESTLEMANIA hotline slid through during the final break of CLASH. Last year, Turner managed to pull all but one, which were filed under the names of dummy corporations....Percy Pringle continues to do some hilarious WCCW interviews but the BRING BACK ERIC campaign has gone on long enough and I can't believe the fans care that much about it....WCCW also had a 900 number question on whether the promotion should take action against Akbar. That can be a lucrative proposition if marketed well.

Rob Russen sent fax material to virtually every independent station in the USA last week, pitching his new PRO WRESTLING REPORT half-hour PWTW-type show. Reportedly, the program has Mick Karch as one of the hosts and has a slot tied down on WGBO in Chicago. The fax claims PWF, CWF and ACW among the groups sharing highlights with the show....Finally, PWF has a slot now on WGGT in Greensboro, N.C.

6:00 (3) 20-MINUTE WORKOUT---Blubber

Dusty Rhodes leads a class of morning aerobics and discusses proper nutrition.

(4) BLACKSTONES---Cartoon

Fred gets a new job with a bigger corporation to develop a news feature called "Fred Blackstone's Nose" and Wilma goes crazy over a box of chicken. Voices....Fred: Joe Pescino.

Wilma: Boni Blackstone. Barney: Ronnie Garvin. Dino: Jim Cornette.

(20) GOMER PYLE, USMC---Comedy

Gomer finally admits to the Sergeant (Bob Carter) his real identity as Vincent Young and is put on six months' k.p. for breakdancing in the barracks. Gomer: Mark Scarpa.

6:30 (3) MORNING STRETCH---Cholesterol

Dusty Rhodes attempts to do 300 sit-ups in two days and discusses proper nutrition.

(4) NEW ZOO REVUE---Children

Gator Keirn, Jake (the Snake) Roberts, The Dog and the Continental Cat all tell stories of being kind to animals. But Tony Anthony shows up to wreck the set.

(20) SUPER SLOPPY DOUBLE DARE---Game

Host Marc Summers welcomes Willie B. Hert, who has flour poured all over him, Joey Maggs---who gets tarred and feathered, and John Michaels, who is sprayed with red paint by Chic Donovan.

7:00 (3) GOOD MORNING AMERICA---Gibson/Lunden

Michael Hayes substitutes this week for Charlie Gibson and immediately declares, "I'm not doing this show with no stupid broad." (2 hrs.)

(4) TODAY---Gumbel/Pauley

Willard Scott discusses his role as referee of the upcoming gut match between the Twin Towers and the Botswana Beast & Kimala before wishing Verne Gagne a happy 93rd birthday. (2 hrs.)

(20) CBS THIS MORNING---Smith/Sullivan

This morning, Harry and Kathleen visit "At Home with....Missy & Eddie and their son, Rick, who tells Alex to go suck on Kathleen's grey hair. (2 hrs.)

9:00 (3) DONAHUE---Discussion

Phil's topic today is "Great Conversationalists and Intellectual Thinkers." Guests include Robert Gibson, Tommy Rich, George Steele, Hossein Vaziri and Mr. Donnie. (60 min.)

(4) GERALDO---Discussion

The Road Warriors are called on to intercede in a Studio Chair Match between Geraldo & Roy Innis vs. the Skinheads. Hawk then tells the audience to join him at a local pub to down Jack Daniels with Kitty Dukakis. (60 min.)

(20) OPRAH WINFREY---Discussion

Today's topic is "Men Who Paint Their Faces." Guests include Jim Hellwig, Steve Borden, Mike and Marc Laurinidas, Bill Eadie and Barry Darsow. (60 min.)

10:00 (3) FAMILY FEUD---Game

Host Ray Combs welcomes the First Family: Eddie, Tommy, Doug, Missy and Rick to take on the Hart family: Stu, Bret, Owen, Bruce and Wayne (and all of the other interchangeable Hart brothers). In the fast money round, Ray asks Rick to "name something you can cure without going to the doctor." Steiner says, "A ham."

(4) MOVIE---Drama

"The Sudan" (1988). Curtis Thompson (Patrick Swayze) calls in The Big Bossman (Ray Traylor) for help when he receives razor blades in an envelope, all signed "A. Butcher." Big Bubba Rogers: Ray Traylor. Big Bubba: Fred Ottman. Steelman: Fred Ottman. Big Ball of Cholesterol: Dusty Rhodes. (2 hrs.)

(20) MARCUS WELBY, M.D.---Drama

Dr. Welby (Robert Young) tries to cure a man who is suffering from multiple personalities. Guest Cast...Kareem Muhammad: Ray Candy. Blackstud Williams: Ray Candy. Commando Ray: Ray Candy. Ray Candy also appears as himself. (60 min.)

10:30 (3) WHEEL OF FORTUNE---Game

Gordon Solie substitutes for Rolf Bernirschke this week. The first puzzle is: F E S A C S N M S K. Rick Steiner is a contestant and gets mad because Eddie & Missy won't let him buy a vowel.

11:00 (3) LIVE WITH REGIS & KATHIE LEE---Variety

Today's guests include Paul E. Dangerously, who demonstrates his exercise routine while reciting the words, "RICKY STEAMBOAT...RICKY STEAMBOAT;" Sherri Martel, who models her spring line of sleazeball fashions; Jim Ross, who does his Ronald Reagan impersonation; and Ranger Ross, who tells Regis, "I'm not kin to Jim." Also, David Crockett sings, "Am I That Easy to Forget?"

(20) A-TEAM---Adventure

"It's All Fake." The regulars are replaced by Vince McMahon, Pat Patterson, Gorilla Monsoon and Bobby Heenan, who are out to disclose that soap operas, sitcoms, and Jimmy Dean pure pork sausage are all not what they're depicted to be. And, oh yes, they declare Mr. T is fake, too. (60 min.)

12:00 (3) YOUNG AND THE RESTLESS---Serial

Billy Jack says he's ready to move to another promotion; Missy asks Eddie when they can move from Hoover; Percy gets his butt kicked and tells people to write him; Liz is on a life-support system as Terry asks, "Are we on?," while Randy is attacked by two slobs; and Paul E. makes an important phone call. (60 min.)

(4) ALL MY CHILDREN---Serial

Pine Valley gets a jolt when Fritz's son Kerry announces on national TV, "I'm the leader of a new generation....a generation on drugs;" Precious gets upset when Jimmy takes a job as a roofer; and Nikita tries to teach his Uncle Ivan how not to talk like Jay Silverheels.

(20) KOJAK---Crime Drama

Theo (Telly Savalas) brings in Gary Hart, Dave Sheldon and Verne Gagne to assist him in solving "The Hairless Murders."

LATE AFTERNOON

4:00 (3) I'VE GOT A SECRET---Game

Host Steve Allen welcomes George Scott, whose secret is that the NWA will air a CLASH OF THE CHAMPIONS VI special on April 2. The panel can't guess it, based on George's clues.

(4) SUPER PASSWORD---Game

Host Bert Convy welcomes celebrity guests Michael Hayes, who gives clues to the word, "UNINVITEDLY," and Lex Luger, who offers clues to "ALLOCADES."

(20) WHAT'S MY LINE?---Game

Host John Daly welcomes mystery guest Frenchy Martin. Frenchy stumps the panel, which can't figure out what he does for a living.

4:30 (3) PEOPLE'S COURT

Judge Wapner hears "The Case of the Stupid Strip," as Jerry Lawler sues Verne Gagne for pain and suffering over the status of the Unified World Heavyweight Championship.

(4) DIVORCE COURT

Judge Keene hears the case of why Randy Savage is contemplating leaving Elizabeth after sitting next to Morgan Fairchild on THE ARSENIO HALL SHOW.

(20) SUPERIOR COURT

Judge Wilson hears a class action suit brought by wrestling fans against the Anabolic Warrior for impersonating a wrestler.

5:00 (3) GUNSMOKE---Western

Marshal Dillon (James Arness) is sent on the trail of The Midnight Rider and Uvalde Slim, who are wanted for acting funky like a monkey.

(4) BONANZA---Western

The Cartwrights are perplexed when Hop Sing is

matwatch

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hired away by the Yamasaki Corporation to manage The Great Mota.

(20) NAME THAT TUNE---Game

Host Jim Ross tells the audience, "Things are breaking down around here," when Fatu starts tearing up the set when he can't name "Catch the Pinfalls" in one note.

5:30 (20) BEAT THE CLOCK---Game

Host Jack Narz welcomes Jerry Blackwell, who is given the stunt of trying to wake up before 2 in the afternoon.

EVENING

7:00 (3) JEOPARDY!---Game

Final Jeopardy answer: His Phone Is Always Busy and Even A Moron Like Him Can Call 1-900-909-9900. Correct Question: Who Is Paul E. Dangerously? But Tommy Rich loses all his money when he guesses, "Who is Mr. Donnie?"

(4) UNSOLVED MYSTERIES

Host Robert Stack travels to the NWA offices in Atlanta to investigate the mystery, "Where Is the Cowboy?" He also interviews wrestling fans about why they didn't know about COUNT-DOWN TO CLASH. (60 min.)

(20) COURTSHIP OF EDDIE'S FATHER---Comedy

In a flashback sequence, Tommy Gilbert turns control of his son Eddie over to UWF president Bill Watts, saying, "Maybe you can do something with him. I can't."

7:30 (3) LOVE CONNECTION---Game

The audience picks Kat LeRoux to have a night on the town with Lex Luger and Queen Kong for a date with Keith Steinborn.

(20) BROTHER LOVE SPECIAL---Religion

Brother Love welcomes Oral Roberts, who prays for healing in the NWA; Jim Bakker, who says Tammy Faye ran into Stan Lane at the mall; and Tom Prichard, who announces, "My brother needs a new makeup man!"

8:00 (3) RAWHIDE---Western

Trail Boss Gil Favor (Jack Petrik) brings in a new herd. Wishbone: Dennis Condrey. (60 min.)

(4) 60 MINUTES

Mike Wallace investigates charges that Bobby Heenan has been betting on his own men's matches; Morley Safer profiles Randy Rose, who insists, "I'm not Pete's brother;" and Ed Bradley looks into behavioral disorders with a closeup view of a man (Jack Victory) who talks to his shirt. (60 min.)

(20) ROSEANNE---Comedy

Roseanne sits on Kendall Windham.

8:30 (20) WONDER YEARS---Comedy

Jason Hervey declares he can't go on a family outing because he has to sit in the audience at STARRCADE.

9:00 (3) MOVIE---Drama

"Guyana Tragedy Revisited: The Untold Story of Jim Jones" (1989). An investigative reporter (Joe Pedicino) uncovers evidence that the leader of Jonestown, alleged to be dead, is alive and passing out Kool-Aid in Atlanta. Jones: Kevin Sullivan. Rep. Leo Ryan: Jim Ross. Mrs. Jones: Fallen Angel. (2 hrs.)

(4) JAKE AND THE FATMAN---Crime Drama

Jake (Jake Roberts) discovers his new investigative partner (Abdullah the Butcher) eats light bulbs. Jody Hamilton: William Conrad.

(20) DALLAS---Drama

J.R. plots the overthrow of an enemy corporation by planting a former booker in the rival company. J.R.: Vince McMahon, Jr. George: Red Buttons. (60 min.)

10:00 (4) 20/20---Downs/Walters

John Stossel updates the whereabouts of David Shultz in the report, "My Ears Are Still Ringing;" Barbara Walters profiles Ric Flair, who says, "I don't care if it's Ted Turner, Jim Herd, Petrik...if I want to run through the streets of Atlanta naked, I can. You want to come with me, Babs?"; and Tom Jarriel, who sits in on Sting giving the Red Rooster crowing lessons.

(20) SESAME STREET IN PRIME TIME

SPECIAL: Big Bird watches as Teddy Long teaches everyone how to count, "One..two..three" in lightning-fast time. Paul E. Dangerously shows children how telephones are not only meant for dialing. Jimmy Hart demonstrates how to glue glitter on suits. (60 min.)

LATE NIGHT

11:30 (3) TONIGHT---Johnny Carson

Johnny's guest host is Tony Schiavone, who advertises for Bikini Bare for moustaches. Guests include Jim Cornette, who sings, "They're Breaking Up That Ol' Gang of Mine;" Harley Race, who discusses his role in the remake of "The Man Who Would Be King;" Mr. Wrestling II, who talks about his new job as spokesperson for Johnnie Walker Red; and Roddy Piper, who tells Tony, "Tom and Paul E. are both imposters." (60 min.)

(4) PAT SAJAK

Pat welcomes Dusty Rhodes, who sings, "I AM...I Said;" Billy Graham and Diamond DALLAS Page, who duet on, "He Ain't Heavy, He's My Bruh-Thuh;" Ted DiBiase, who discusses his new role in "The Bela Lugosi Story;" and Steve Williams, who discusses his autobiography, "I'm STILL the UWF Heavyweight Champion." (90 min.)

(20) NIGHTLINE---Ted Koppel

Ted interviews Capt. Lou Albano, Thunderbolt Patterson, Jim Wilson, Rep. Richard Floyd and Morton Downey Jr. Ted takes a break for the little boys' room during an entire segment while these guys try to break the decibel meter. (Live)

12:00 (20) SANFORD AND SON---Comedy

Fred (Redd Foxx) jumps up from his ring-side seat at WRESTLEMANIA V, walks over to the neutral corner and yells, "This is the BIG ONE, Elizabeth." Lamont: Ron Simmons.

CABLE RATINGS RAP (Week of March 25-27)

	Rtg	Share	Tot.	Homes
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WWF PRIME TIME (USA 3/27)	3.8	5.9	1.778	mil.
NWA WORLD CHAMP. (TBS 3/25)	2.7	5.3	1.304	mil.
WWF ALL-AMERICAN (USA 3/26)	2.6	8.4	1.217	mil.
NWA MAIN EVENT (TBS 3/26)	2.5	6.0	1.208	mil.
NWA MAIN EVENT AM (TBS 3/25)	0.9	6.5	427,000	

(ANALYSIS: No doubt, the final week's buildup for WM5 carried PRIME TIME to its highest number in recent memory. WCW held steady for George Scott's swan song. But if you question why All-Am. and NME were both down Sunday, it is because the overall homes using TV on Easter Sunday were substantially down nationwide. Note that their shares held at their usual level. Oddly, the a.m. NME actually GAINED audience for a rerun.

SYNDICATION: WWF did a 10.0 on 241 stations for the week ending March 12.)

Steve's Sidelights By Steve Beverly

(STEVE'S NOTE: If you have not read the story on Page 10, please do so before reading this column.)

ATLANTA - If there is a recurring question I have had in recent weeks, it is, "When are you going to blast the NWA for hiring George Scott in your column?"

For one thing, unless blatant arrogance or total disregard for the welfare of a promotion is exercised by an individual, be he a booker or wrestler, I don't work that way. I intended to wait until the April 17 MATWATCH, which would have given me an opportunity to review Ted Turner's NWA at six months and give Mr. Scott three full months on the job to evaluate his performance.

Frankly, as I told Jack Petrik of TBS Tuesday morning, at the risk of offending some people in the office, it would not have been a pretty column. If you have read the Page 10 story, you understand that 90 percent of the rules for effective wrestling promotion into the 1990s were broken in the brief Scott regime, a practice which would have virtually destroyed this promotion had it continued much longer. Based on what I was told by several in the promotion and Scott himself in early February, I even blundered my way in this publication by saying I felt people would be pleasantly surprised by Scott's direction for the NWA. If even one of those early ideas had been executed effectively, George would still be booking today. He didn't. He isn't. And I was wrong.

However, the time has come to leave the Scott era behind (never totally away from memory, though, just as a reminder of how low things can sink) and look at the future of this organization.

In the last week, I have felt magnified respect for Jim Herd, whom I met for the first time Thursday night, and Petrik. They knew the gig was up and they didn't wait for any magical event for Scott to hang himself. They acted.

Second, they appointed an interim booking committee of some of the most fertile wrestling and television minds in this profession. In just two nights, it was like the old Chevrolet commercial, "Now, that's more like it." The final TBS studio taping Wednesday night was much more focused and lively than anything Scott ever put on the air or Dusty Rhodes before him in Dusty's final year.

Third, they didn't wait 48 hours to put a belt around Sting's waist (when he beat Mike Rotunda for the TV title at THE CENTER STAGE, which aired last Saturday night on TBS). And it was done in semi-lumberjack fashion with the Varsity Club, Lex Luger and Ricky Steamboat at ringside to cheer their respective colleagues.

Fourth, the matches taped at CENTER STAGE for air this coming Saturday already worked at building some of the showdowns for the May 7 pay show. A Jack Victory-Randy Rose match, a Lex Luger-Michael Hayes grudge battle for next Sunday's NWA MAIN EVENT, a tag match in which the Iron Sheik and Ranger Ross were in opposite sides, another Luger match vs. Kendall Windham, two excellent DANGER ZONES and letting Keiji Muto loose to do many of his spectacular flying moves (though I still wish they'd take the green paint off of him).

Fifth, a young face who has been missing all too prematurely: Shane Douglas, who takes on Bob Orton Jr. next Saturday on WCW (I'm not telling finishes....I want you to be entertained).

Sixth, acting on some necessary talent situations. Hiro Matsuda was not present at the taping with any of his troops. Ron Simmons was turned

heel, something we suggested be considered last fall, as I predict he can play a mean Ernie character. Plus, Breakdance Young is gone after refusing to do a job for Orton, sparing the coming Brian Pillman of the grief of having to team with the most unpopular young babyface on this circuit in many years.

The booker situation was not settled as of this writing. My only skittishness is that senior consultant Jim Barnett is reportedly pushing the name Red Bastein on the group, which---in my view---would be the same story as the George Scott saga, even the same color of hair. I'll openly advocate here and now that TBS either hire Bill Watts or stick with its current committee setup, as long as Herd and Ross serve as neutralizing factors to keep personal egos from clouding the quality of booking. Both are capable of doing so.

I attended opening night at CENTER STAGE not expecting as much progress to be made in 48 hours as was. No, it didn't reach the level of greatness. That's going to take time, even if Watts arrives. But it was good. It was promising. And it showed me good minds can produce entertaining wrestling television. The crowd was only about 550 for the 750-seat theatre but I chalk that up to Scott's weak plugs for the new tape locale and the fact that the last eight weeks of TV have been so weak that a lot of Atlanta locals probably didn't trust they would see a lively show, free or not.

As Jim Ross said after the show, "It's a start." That Sting-Rotunda match is one of the three best on broadcast TV this year and I was truly entertained. Except for some lulls in the Casey-Simmons match, the crowd wasn't quiet all evening and even the jobber matches had more purpose.

Much work has to be done and I predict it will take three to four months in the arenas to undo the Scott damage and get behinds in seats. The decision on booking may have already been made as you read this and it is critical to this group's ability to return as a major player.

The CENTER STAGE is going to be a fun place for TBS wrestling, as it creates a "party night" atmosphere. And I predict that if the direction of the TV shows continues as did last Thursday's taping, it will only be three or four outings before crowds will be turned away.

All of this is a big if---based on personnel decisions, creativity and learning from mistakes when they are made, as they will be. But the NWA executives acted in a firm, rational, but expeditious manner last week and that is all wrestling fans can ask. Maybe now (heavens, I hope our hopes aren't getting too high) the promise of an entertaining and competitive Turner-owned NWA may yet have a chance for what many mat fans have clamored for these past six months.

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NOTE: Dan Reilly of Enfield CT has won the second and final WRESTLE WAR '89 T-shirt available. Thanks to others who brought us gift subscriptions. We'll have another promotion shortly.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY/STATE/ZIP _____

IF GIFT, GIFT FROM _____

INSTANT REVIEW: THE COUNTDOWN SHOWS

(Countdown to Clash)

Despite a few production problems and a week of promotional turmoil and uncertainty, COUNTDOWN TO CLASH---probably viewed by newsletter subscribers, families and friends of NWA wrestlers and Jason Hervey---was a lively perk-up to the Sunday New Orleans show. Probably a case of too much, too little, too late, as Johnny Mathis & Deniece Williams would sing.

From the nice, active opening with a peppy musical theme to the nostalgic reunion of NWA legends Lou Thesz and Harley Race, one could find something for almost everyone in the show.

Early on, the Steamboat training video was a strong combination of music and visual (with NO jumpcuts!) in a fashion we had suggested for the weaker Tony Schiavone news packages in February.

The Jim Ross-Paul E. Dangerously combination is rapidly proving to be the most inspired pairing on the air with their mix of tension and humor, particularly with Dangerously's facial expressions.

Joe Pedicino's touch could be seen in a music video which actually told a story of the evolution of the Steamboat-Flair wars. It moved and had purpose.

Having been at the COUNTDOWN taping last Thursday, it was electric in nostalgic emotion to see Thesz and Race emerge from the curtains. Thesz was given a respectful reaction but, in the biggest surprise of the night, Race was given a spontaneous standing ovation which was sustained as the CENTER STAGE fans mobbed him. Unfortunately, shaky camera work forced Joe into some "creative editing" which kept you at home from realizing the flavor of the Race reception.

Both Thesz and Race offered perceptive comments on Flair and Steamboat as legends of the game. Having the live crowd reaction juiced up their forum.

Flair and Steamboat also had a refined, sports-oriented debate on the Sunday matchup. Unfortunately, Steamboat still can't overcome being NWA champion when the most popular heel in this decade is still drawing more cheers than The Dragon and the reax seems awkward on a show still designed to breed positive feelings for Steamboat.

Bump shots with fan predictions and the card lineup were a nice touch. However, if I were to grade the show down, it would be in three areas: the shaky camera work during the Thesz-Race entrances and portions of the forum; (2) I would have had Ross pre-tape a short 60-sec-

ond retrospective of the Race and Thesz careers to air before they were introduced, rather than the quick clips we saw during their introductions ---and then had Ross introduce them with a tight, moving camera following them to the table; and (3) the graphics listing the card were far too small, particularly the "rest of the card" slate, which was left on-screen far too briefly to digest.

But the live DANGER ZONE and the Gilbert-Steiner vs. Varsity Club Omni match gave this show elements of a genuine magazine show. I hope it is a start toward a "different" kind of Friday night show, eventually, on TBS.

(Countdown to Wrestlemania V)

All three WEF syndicated shows offered virtually the same buildups to WRESTLEMANIA V matchups, with only the hosts interchangeable.

In slickness and post-production editing, Titan Sports has no peer in the business and the well-flowed retrospectives of the key WM5 events were what we have come to expect from this group.

The touch was nice to have the announcers in various locales of Trump Plaza for their various wraparounds and segments. It gave the same feel as a television newscast doing a live remote shot.

Even the casual fan or first-time watcher was able to understand the feuds and how they developed, something the NWA improved at before CHITOWN RUMBLE but still has a long way to go in achieving parity in the archive approach.

Of the three shows, Tony Schiavone, in my view, though he occasionally still seems uncomfortable with some of the WWF characters, offered the best overall hosting job and Jesse Ventura was good for a couple of lines.

Where I fault this approach is that, except in the rerun matches, Ventura is wasted because he's only seen live at the beginning and end and has little chance to let much fresh humor come through. Plus, as a personal taste, I felt the WEF was more effective in years past by having an arena show which built the tension with last-minute live elements. However, I suppose the thinking was that record revenues are already assured, so why go to the expense of an additional house taping.

This group offered six weeks of the best Hogan-Savage individual interviews with Savage clearly coming across as the superior camera performer, in our view. One has to wonder if Sunday's match didn't leave viewers with the belief that the WM5 main event was like many Super Bowls, where the buildup is far more dramatic than the actual event itself.

AFTER MIDNIGHT: Cornette & The Midnight Express will fulfill some final NWA bookings through April 24, including dates in Louisville and Huntington WV.

MIDNIGHT CALLERS: Sources tell MATWATCH the Cornette/Midnights combo have had calls from Bill Dundee of Continental, from the PWF and from several independent bookers in the Appalachian region and after a short vacation, will begin working some of those dates, beginning in mid-May.

MIDNIGHT MAIL: Reader mail is already coming in on the MEx situation but an industry expert, whom I value as an analyst, says: "This is where some smart fans show they aren't that smart. Jim Cornette's and the Midnight Express' leaving could be the best thing that ever happened to them because after four years, they were already showing signs of recycling old material on interviews and there genuinely was little left for them to do, at least in the NWA, other than go downhill." Just thought you'd like to hear another view from a source which must be protected.

CAT'S IN THE COFFIN: The angle shot for CWF TV March 26 was one of the funniest that group has ever done. It's complicated to explain but Tony Anthony came out with a coffin to hold a "funeral" for the Continental Cat, whom he destroyed two weeks earlier. The heels came out and Tom Prichard was to deliver the eulogy. But as the service was in progress, Anthony was interrupted with the news that Johnny & Davey Rich had made off with their hearse. As Tony & the heels tore out after the Riches, Danny Davis sneaked out in the cat costume and climbed in the coffin. When Anthony returned, Davis suckerpunched him and rolled away with six heels in tow. Bill Dundee had the creative juices flowing on that one.

SIX-MAN STUFF: The CWF show for this weekend features its first 2-out-of-3 fall match in ages, a 6-man between the Hunters & Dundee and Todd Morton/Wendell Cooley/Davis. I'm not much on the Hunters but I like the idea of more 2-3 fall bouts.

MORE HULKAMOVIEA: An L.A. film analyst has told us chances are NO HOLDS BARRED with Hulk Hogan will not make its scheduled June open for a key reason: three major studios have most of the nation's big screens booked in June and July for blockbuster releases and HOLDS probably could not get enough houses to even foster its meager chance for success. Our expert bets on an August release date now.

HOGAN ON TAPE: RCA/Columbia Pictures Worldwide Video has acquired the continental home video rights to the flick. The rights were sold for \$2.5 million.

ANOTHER RING FLICK: Principal photography is scheduled to begin April 10 on AMERICAN ANGELS, yet another wrestling film. It's from Sebastian International Films and we're told this may star Medusa Miceli as a small-town girl who becomes a wrestler.

FNN & TURNER: What had been rumored to be a certain sale of Financial News Network to Turner Broadcasting has died. The TBS board, led by opposition from major stockholder Tele-Communications, Inc., and its chairman, John Malone, defeated the purchase proposal of 45% interest into FNN. The deal was regarded by Malone as too expensive and he convinced enough directors to nix it. Turner is not said to be unhappy about the squashing but still has his eye on FNN. A purchase, however, would almost certainly mean the end of the weekend SCORE sports service.

DOUG'S IN: Eddie Gilbert's brother, Doug, who wrestled with him in Memphis last year and last appeared as Nightmare Freddy in the CWF, is reportedly coming into the NWA as himself. He's already been masquerading as The Raider. Doug reportedly will be used to heighten tensions within the First Family.

COMINGS & GOINGS

FOXY BRUNO?: Latest talk floating---which I have not been able to substantiate---is that Bruno Sammartino and Merv Griffin have been talking with either the FOX Network or the net's owned-and-operated stations about carrying its proposed new wrestling venture.

DROPPING OUT: No firm word yet but talk is that WXTX in Columbus will drop its nightly 8 p.m. mat strip but retain WWF WRESTLING CHALLENGE for a Saturday a.m. slot, as well as keeping WORLD CLASS and NWA PRO. If that's so, gone would be the NWA MAIN EVENT, GLOW, WRESTLING SPOTLIGHT and SOUTHERN. That would only leave Southern on in Atlanta, Chattanooga, Paducah KY and a couple of North Georgia independents.

SLAP IT IN: Gotta tell you this Jerry Blackwell story. Reportedly, the woman handling post-production for SCW at WCOM-TV in Griffin GA, wakened Blackwell (at 1:30 p.m., no less) to say announcer Alan Starr had cued to a "Blast from the Past" (for a 17-month-old promotion, such as Southern, it's pretty early to start having "classics") but she wasn't told what match to edit in. A sleepy Blackwell told her, "You've got six months worth of tapes there. Just pick one and slap it in." So, she "slapped" in a three-month-old match of The Bullet vs. Tommy Rich. Just goes to show how much thought goes into producing some wrestling shows.

T-SHIRTS: Our friend, Dan Reilly, won the other WRESTLE WAR '89 T-shirt for bringing in new gift subscribers to MATWATCH. I have had eleven calls from people wanting to know how they can purchase one after seeing people in the NWA TV crowds wear them. Sorry, gang. The NWA office tells me only a limited supply has been distributed for promotional purposes only. They are not for general sale to the public. (COMMENTARY: Sounds to me like the marketing department needs to get cooking because there is interest in those things.)

MORE TITAN: Reportedly, Ronnie Garvin is also on the WWF hit list. A rumor which I think is exactly that is that Jimmy Hart is being axed. Gone as agents are Nick Bockwinkel and Pedro Morales.

CHECK IT OUT: Did anyone notice that in the USA TODAY story on Super Sunday (which, for the first time, acknowledged the existence of the NWA), Titan was credited with 135 closed-circuit locales when it only lists 64 in its paid ad? Hogan's credibility with knowledgeable fans hit a new low with his dubbing the NWA "an outlaw group." Also, since when does the WWF not consider the NWA competition as acknowledged in the story? Was the April 2 scare over PPV not competition? What about Vince booking Nashville on May 6? I wish the NWA could pull out of there and move the show to Las Vegas or even The Omni.

MIDNIGHT MONTGOMERY: We've learned the Midnights have committed to work over a one-month period with the CWF, so with Dundee booking and Cornette invading, that TV show should resurge.

MUSIC CITY UPDATE: The card for the NWA May 7 PPV in The Observer is correct but may be altered. Flair-Steamboat III, Luger vs. Hayes for the U.S. title, Road Warriors & Sting vs. Varsity Club, SST vs. Gilbert/Steiner for the U.S. tag title, Iron Sheik vs. Ranger Ross and a Jack Victory-Randy Rose rematch. But expect Barry Windham, recovering now from surgery, to be involved in a substantive fashion.

Scott Out As NWA Booker Search Focuses On Watts, Others

ATLANTA - Collapsed by an inexplicable failure to promote specific CLASH OF THE CHAMPIONS VI matches on TBS/NWA TV programs, George Scott was fired last Tuesday as NWA booker after an 11-week stint which has left the veteran wrestling alliance with deep troubles.

Scott, who took over for interim booker Jim Crockett Jan. 16, was unable to overcome a booking style which relied heavily on 1970s-style workrates, veteran stars past their prime and weak emphasis of supercard matchups on various NWA television shows.

In the last week, MATWATCH has learned the following concerning the Scott situation:

***TBS executives in both the wrestling and programming ends were dissatisfied with Scott's recent TV, which dropped to a 2.2 rating March 11, and---despite gains the past two weeks---failed to develop angles or spark to build house attendance.

***Scott had grown increasingly defensive of criticism of his booking philosophy and was retreating from using ideas offered by wrestlers or other NWA personnel.

***MATWATCH talked to World Championship Wrestling, Inc., president Jack Petrik and senior vice president Jim Herd Tuesday and both (who had been away from Atlanta, respectively, on TBS business and for a family funeral) were dismayed at the March 25 show, in which the only specific mention of a CLASH VI match came in two 15-second TBS promos and only a token plug of last Friday's CLASH COUNTDOWN special offered.

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***Petrik told MATWATCH "absolutely no order" came from his office to dilute CLASH VI promotion, nor from anywhere else in TBS. We subsequently learned Scott was telling announcers and wrestlers to soft-pedal the plugs, allegedly saying a hard-sell would hurt other house shows on the circuit.

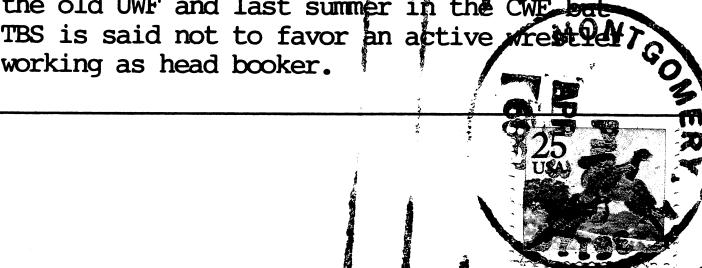
***Scott had been told by superiors to bring in "young, exciting, fresh talent" which could potentially become new stars in the sport. While hiring Keiji Muto (whose "son of Kabuki" gimmick is drawing criticism in wrestling circles) and Ranger Ross have been considered plusses, TBS executives were displeased with the hiring of the Iron Sheik and his continued push of Junkyard Dog and Butch Reed, two veteran stars hired by the Jim Crockett regime, and Scott's desire to go after retreads from the WWF, soon expected to be dismissed by Vince McMahon.

TBS insiders and wrestlers were also wearying of industry jokes that Scott "may be on Vince's payroll." Scott, who could not be reached for a comment, was said by Titan officials to have called its office seeking work.

As for TBS, an interim booking committee, said to include Herd, Jim Ross, NWA senior consultant Jim Barnett, Eddie Gilbert, Kevin Sullivan and, possibly, Ric Flair met Wednesday to map short-term plans.

Speculation for a possible successor centered around the veteran Bill Watts, who would be a popular choice of wrestlers and fans, based on his past track record of television success with his former Mid-South promotion. If contacted, Watts is said to be interested in the post. Barnett is known to oppose Watts for unspecified reasons but a strong lobbying effort is expected on Watts' behalf.

Former WCW booker Ole Anderson was in the Atlanta office Wednesday and reportedly has been openly campaigning for the job. Gilbert, a Watts protege, has experience booking for the old UWF and last summer in the CWF but TBS is said not to favor an active wrestler working as head booker.



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